

CURRENT PRACTICES IN REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS IN SELECTED
IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS WITH 200-500 STUDENT POPULATION

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of a system of reporting is to communicate to the parents and pupils the progress that the child has made at a particular stage in his development. **Schools** report on the progress of students in one or more ways. Report cards are known to be one of the most commonly used reporting practices. Newer reporting procedures have been introduced from time to time to report progress to parents and pupils. In order to find out just what these methods are or have been used in recent years and how extensively schools are making use of these methods, it is desirable that periodic surveys be made.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study was to find out what methods were being used for reporting progress in elementary schools with student populations of 200-500, the number of schools using each method, and the frequency with which each method was used in a school year. Principal's opinions regarding the degree to which reporting practices were meeting each school's desired objectives were also included. The above information was compiled for use by administrators in order that they have current data to

study, analyze, and incorporate into their school's reporting procedures if they so desired.

Importance of the study. A great deal of discussion and attention in the form of meetings, committees, reports, articles, and texts have been devoted to the major problem of reporting to parents. Despite the amount of literature relating to reporting, very few studies have been concerned with actual research on reporting to parents.¹

Any reporting system, according to Hesier and Wagner, which clearly informs parents of their children's progress and results in better school work is a good one and should be supported.² In order to improve the reporting techniques now in use, Camp suggested that teachers, parents, and pupils analyze the present reporting system in a logical manner, co-operatively seek solutions to any problems, and maintain lines of intercommunication.³

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

D Slips. D slips are usually in the form of letters that are sent home to the parents informing them of their

¹Joseph W. Halliwell, "Dual Report Cards," Clearing House, XXXVI (December, 1961), 245.

²M. M. Hosier and G. W. Wagner, "Promising Practices in Reporting Pupil Progress," Midland Schools, LXXV (September, 1960), 33.

³William Alexander and Louie T. Camp, "Special Feature on Reporting," National Education Journal, XLV (December, 1959),

child's poor work. The D mark is the lowest passing grade given.

F Slips. F slips are usually in the form of letters that are sent hom to the parents informing them of their child's failing work. The F mark indicates that a passing grade was not obtained and that the subject probably must be repeated.

III. LIMITATIONS

The conclusions of this study had certain limitations due to the sampling and the amount of material covered by the questionnaire used to gather the data.

Responses were received from 215 principals of Iowa elementary schools in the winter of 1967. This writer believed that the number contacted would be large enough to be representative of the reporting procedures currently being used in Iowa elementary schools. The questionnaire used in this survey in connection with this research was limited to the following areas:

1. Types of methods used in reporting progress.
2. Procedures used in distributing progress reports.
3. Types of grading systems used in academic subjects.
4. Factors evaluated other than subject matter.
5. Types of grading systems used in areas other than subject matter.

6. Frequency of reporting progress.
7. How nearly each reporting practice that is used meets the school's desired objectives.

IV. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Full appraisal of pupil progress is an essential part of the education program. To report progress adequately to parents, the school finds responsibility for devising procedures which realize its aims. Therefore, there is increased need to provide reporting methods which encompass a more comprehensive view of the broad educational efforts of the school. Experimentation has resulted in improved forms and has prompted educators to discover new evaluation devices. Otto wrote:

Many teachers have always been dissatisfied with the conventional and familiar type of report card. The typical card used in schools today is a fairly small one which provides spaces for the child's name and grade, days present or absent, times tardy, the teacher's marks in the subject fields, and a place for the parent to sign each time the card is sent home. It is not difficult to understand why teachers dislike this type of report card as a means of communication between school and home. Dissatisfaction with it has led many school systems to use other type of cards which would provide a better means of communication between school and home.¹

Even though most schools have not yet arrived at completely satisfactory reports, current trends are in a

¹Henry J. Otto, Principles of Elementary Education (New York: Rinehart Company, 1949), pp. 367-368.

direction away from self-centered reports toward consideration of individual pupil growth in the major developmental areas embodied in the school's objectives. In some situations, the use of letters and conferences with parents have replaced report cards or are supplementary to them. Such instruments have necessitated the development of descriptive and anecdotal recording techniques in addition to the use of other significant data.

According to Strang, reports to parents seem to be becoming more humane, more personal, more astute, and more concerned with the future than with the past. They are more in line with sound educational objectives and far more useful in guidance purposes than the traditional report card.¹

Rating children by means of a percentage system in order to indicate the child's school environment in relation to grade standards is the original method of communicating pupil progress to parents. While still widely used, criticism of this method lies in the fact that it merely records academic achievement with no provisions for analyzing the other important aspects of human growth. Another valid criticism of this plan is that it is characterized by much finer distinctions than human judgment has the capacity to make. Research shows that traditional report cards, unfortunately,

¹Ruth Strang, Reporting to Parents (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1947), p. 8.

have been instrumental in producing deleterious effects on some children.¹ Hildreth wrote:

Under present conditions there is mounting evidence that report cards which contain little more than letter or percentage grades in school achievement and deportment can do more harm than good. Report cards have contributed to truancy, made children unhappy, and have produced unwholesome rivalry among children. They have served as a punitive device and as a means of forcing children to perform disliked school tasks. Parents by punishing children for unsatisfactory reports have misused the information.²

Morphet, Johns, and Reller indicated that:

The most primitive method of reporting is a report card sent out quarterly that lists the formal subjects in the school curriculum and a mark for each subject and perhaps a mark on deportment. This type of reporting provides a very meager basis for pupil teacher co-operation. If the marks are unsatisfactory it is more likely to provide a basis for parental punishment of the pupil or for a conflict between the parent and the teacher. Progressive teachers have realized for a long time that the formal report card is a very poor basis of reporting the progress of pupils to parents. Various attempts have been made to improve methods of reporting to parents. Perhaps the most promising development in reporting to parents has been the increase in provisions for parent-teacher conferences concerning pupil's progress.³

A symbolic method of letter and number designations, usually a five-point system, has become popular as a

¹ John W. M. Rothney, Evaluating and Reporting Pupil Progress (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1955), pp. 17-19.

² Gertrude Hildreth, Child Growth Through Education (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1948), p. 372.

³ Edgar L. Morphet, Roe L. Johns, and Theodore L. Reller, Educational Administration: Concepts, Practices, and Issues (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1959), pp. 382-383.

substitute for the percentage plan in many schools. The futility of attempting to classify individuals in 100 one groups is pointed out in contrast to the fairly valid judgments that can be formed about individuals by classifying them into about five groups by use of symbols. Although an improvement over the percentage system, many of the same disadvantages are encountered in the symbolic marking system.¹

In his book Measurement in Today's Schools, Ross stated that:

Marks are usually thought of as being absolute or relative. The percentage system is absolute. It has the appearance of being extremely simple, but in reality is subject to serious misinterpretation. A mark of 100% does not mean the pupil is perfect in the course, and a 0% does not mean the complete absence of knowledge. . . . Furthermore, such a system attempts a degree of refinement in educational measurement that is impossible of attainment today with the instruments available.²

More recently, in an effort to reduce the competitive effect of letter grades, some schools have begun to use terms such as satisfactory and unsatisfactory. In preface to the inauguration of these broad terms, innovations in written reports were necessary to change the amount and type of information included. Contained in newer forms, employed primarily by the elementary school, are items of information concerning individual growth in basic skills, attitudes,

¹C. C. Ross, Measurement in Today's Schools (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1947), p. 406.

²Ibid., p. 408.

personality traits, and desirable habits. It may be argued that the increased amount of information, coupled with the reduction of the competitive element, tend to constitute a better instrument of guidance for both the home and the school than the traditional reports. **Because it has often** limited pupil's incentive to do better work by placing less emphasis on competition, however, the broad classification has been wanting. A further objection advanced against this method is that most employers of this system fail to establish bases for objectivity determining capacity and achievement and set up no definite standards for how far a pupil's achievement must lag behind before his progress is termed unsatisfactory. As an additional criticism, Traxler points out that "children are not readily divided into two clear-cut groups, for they will vary all the way from extremely favorable to unfavorable, and most of them cluster near the average."¹

Dual marking systems, designed to diminish some of the difficulties encountered in the limited dichotomous scale, indicate to parents both actual achievement in relation to grade standard and achievement in relation to capacity. The former is commonly expressed in letter symbols "A", "B", "C", "D", and "F", while the latter is designated often by number graduations from "1" to "3", ranging from "very good" to "needs improvement". This system, used by a number of

¹Arthur E. Traxler, Techniques of Guidance (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945), p. 237.

schools has gained parent support in that it provides them with a clearer understanding of their child's capacity for achievement.

Having been attacked frequently and on many grounds, all marking systems have undergone the fire of criticism. Chief among their opponents' claims is that they are unreliable. Too often teachers are influenced by extraneous items such as handwriting, conduct, language ability, seating arrangement in the class, and ratings on personality traits in determining marks.

Because of the variance of teacher standards, marks at best are the product of opinion. Research points out that not only do they emphasize the less vital phases of growth and encourage a false type of scholarship but offer no guidance opportunities in education.

Another criticism of symbolic evaluation is that it heightens competition, thereby producing feelings of insecurity and inferiority among those children whose limitations do not permit them to reach the higher range of the scale. Likewise, it festers an attitude of superiority in others.¹

On the other side, nevertheless, are those in defense of traditional symbols. These proponents uphold the competitive feature of marking as a preparation for the

¹J. Stanley Ahmann and Marvin D. Glock, Evaluating Pupil Growth (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1963), p. 547.

competition pupils will face in later life. Marks, a motivation device, stimulate the pupil to work harder and thus attain greater scholastic accomplishments.¹

Another defensive argument is that business firms still regard marks as evidence of a pupil's success in secondary school and make their selection of employees accordingly, while colleges and universities often base entrance requirements on this kind of evaluation.

A study made by Ross shows that 70 per cent of the teachers and principals and 80 per cent of the pupils and parents favored the continuation of marks. In summary it may be pointed out that marks reach their greatest value when they are supported by objective data and when they offer information about the total development of the child.²

Another reporting system which has gained considerable following is the letter to the parents. Through this medium, the teacher can provide essential information about pupil progress or lack of progress and make specific suggestions for improvement. Often letters help the teacher reach the crux of the problem or report special information more adequately than printed forms and, thereby, are a substantial aid to parents in understanding the child's school problems.

¹Ibid.

²Ross, op. cit., p. 410.

The effectiveness of such an instrument, however, is dependent upon the teacher's ability to understand the child and his natural growth patterns as well as to observe, analyze, and record objectively evidences of the pupil's development. Lack of time to report thoughtfully by letter is another pitfall of this system.

Most writers agree that the parent conference is the best method devised thus far to promote mutual understanding between the home and the school, but appear divided on whether conferences should supplement or replace written reports. They point out that by participation in the conference method, parents receive a more personalized explanation of the school program and learn directly about the pupil's behavior and adjustment to school. In turn, parents find opportunity for sharing concerning his out-of-school behavior.¹

Whether the conference strengthens home-school relations depends on the skill with which it is conducted. Relative to the success of this plan, also, is the training of teachers in the intelligent use of guidance techniques and the provision of adequate methods of recording information. According to Traxler:

In schools which maintain individual records for their pupils and which are fortunate enough to be able to get the parents to come to school for

¹James B. Burr, William Coffield, Theodore J. Jensen, and Ross L. Neagley, Elementary School Administration (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1963), p. 239.

individual conferences at regular intervals, it would seem that no report form other than the cumulative record card should be needed. Three essential aspects of an adequate system of reporting are: ability, present status, and growth. The cumulative based in part upon objective measurement seems to be more successful in presenting these three indispensable kinds of information than any other report form that has yet been devised.¹

Because of opportunities for close supervision of a smaller number of pupils over a longer period of time, during each day, the elementary school teacher has a greater possibility of observing and recording the child's total reaction to school living. Therefore, the more recent experiments with reporting pupil progress that has been discussed in this chapter would seem of great value for the elementary school.

It was the purpose of this survey, therefore, to determine what methods of reporting pupil progress were used in the elementary school and to ascertain whether or not current educational literature and school practice are in agreement.

V. PROCEDURE

The intent of this survey was to determine what methods of reporting pupil progress were currently in use in the elementary schools of 232 Iowa school systems. An additional concern was the degree to which the methods conformed to theories advanced in current educational philosophy.

¹Traxler, op. cit., pp. 278-279.

A questionnaire was prepared with a threefold purpose. It was designed first of all, to discover the nature of the reporting method in use, secondly, to determine to what extent newer reporting procedures are being implemented; and finally, to find out if the reporting practices were meeting the schools objectives.

The questionnaire was sent to the elementary principals in each of the 232 schools surveyed. Since some limitations must be placed on the scope of the study, towns with 200-500 elementary student population were used. Based on the population figures quoted in the Iowa Educational Directory of 1965-1966, 232 towns fell in the designated population bracket. Returns were received from 215 schools.

A letter of introduction explaining the reason for obtaining the information was enclosed with each questionnaire along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope in which to return the completed questionnaire. The letter, questionnaire and self-addressed envelope were mailed February 13, 1967. Within four weeks 215 questionnaires had been returned.

In the following chapter a tabulation and interpretation of the responses will be presented.

CHAPTER II

PRESENTATION OF DATA

This chapter is devoted to the presentation and summarization of the data obtained from the elementary principals sampled. The discussion of the materials follows the same sequence as that of the questions asked on the questionnaire.

The data were obtained from 215 principals from all parts of the state of Iowa. Of the 232 elementary principals who were sent the questionnaire, 17 did not return a completed questionnaire. The rate of return was 92.67 per cent.

I. REPORTING PROCEDURES

Student progress reporting in elementary schools.

Table I shows that there were a variety of reporting practices used in the elementary schools in the state of Iowa. The most widely used progress reporting method was report cards plus parent-teacher conferences, which was used by 93.5 per cent of the schools. The next most widely used were D slips and F slips, which were used by 19.1 per cent of the schools. Ten different reporting practices were listed. Of the ten, self evaluations and conferences only ranked lowest in frequency. Only 0.9 of one per cent of the principals stated that they made use of either of these practices.

TABLE I
PRACTICES USED IN REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS AS REPORTED
BY 215 IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS IN 1967

Practice Used	Number	Per cent
Report cards plus parent-teacher conferences	201	93.5
D slips	41	19.1
F slips	41	19.1
Progress report forms	16	7.4
Report cards	11	5.1
Progress report letters	9	4.2
Checklists	3	3.7
Narrative reports	5	2.3
Conferences	2	0.9
Self-evaluations	2	0.9

Designing of the report card. According to Table II, 64.2 per cent of the schools used report cards that were designed by the local school personnel. Nine-tenths of one per cent stated that they used no report cards in their system.

TABLE II
METHODS USED IN DESIGNING REPORT CARDS AS REPORTED
BY 215 IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS IN 1967

Method	Number	Per cent
By local school district or school staff	138	64.2
By publishing company	60	27.9
Partly by local school district or school staff and partly by publishing company	15	7.0
Do not use report cards	2	0.9

Methods used in distributing report cards. Table III shows that there are eight different methods used to distribute report cards. The most widely used procedure was to have the teacher give out the report cards to the students. Fifty-two and one-tenth per cent of the principals stated that the teachers in their school used this method to distribute report cards. Another 26.5 per cent of the principals reported that their teachers distributed report cards to students part of the time and the rest of the time gave them to parents at conference time. Another 6.5 per cent of the principals stated that the teachers distribute the report cards to the students, sometimes to the parents, and sometimes they are mailed to the parents.

TABLE III

METHODS USED IN DISTRIBUTING REPORT CARDS AS REPORTED BY 215
IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN 1967

Method	Number	Per cent
Teachers give to students	112	52.1
Teachers sometimes give to students and sometimes to parents	57	26.5
Teachers sometimes give to students, sometimes to parents, and sometimes mail to parents	14	6.5
Teachers give to parents	12	5.6
Teachers give to students except at end of year when they are mailed	9	4.2
Teachers sometimes give to students and sometimes mail to parents	4	1.9
Teachers mail to parents	3	1.4
Teachers sometimes give to parents and sometimes mail to parents	2	0.9
No report cards given	2	0.9

Grading systems used in academic subjects. Table IV illustrates the academic grading systems used in each of the schools that returned questionnaires. Fifty-five and three-tenths per cent of the schools use a grade of A, B, C, D, F. The next popular type of grading was a combination of A, B, C, D, F and S, I, U. This type of grading accounted for 7.8 per cent. All total, 37 different types of grading systems were used by the 215 schools returning questionnaires.

TABLE IV

GRADING SYSTEMS USED IN RECORDING ACADEMIC GRADES ON REPORT
CARDS AS REPORTED BY 215 IOWA ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN 1967

System	Number	Per cent
A, B, C, D, F	119	55.3
A, B, C, D, F, and S, I, U	21	7.8
A, B, C, D, E	11	5.1
A, B, C, D, F and S, U	11	5.1
A, B, C, D, F and S, N, I, U	5	2.3
A, B, C, D, U	4	1.9
A, B, C, D, F and S, N, U	3	1.4
A, B, C, D, F and O, S, U	3	1.4
No response given	3	1.4
A, B, C, D, F and 1, 2, 3	2	0.9
A, B, C, D, F and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and X, Y, Z	2	0.9
A, B, C, D, E and S, I, U	2	0.9
A, B, C, D, U and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	2	0.9
A, B, C, D, U and S, I, U	2	0.9
Per centage scores	2	0.9
A, B, C, D, E and 1, 2, 3, 4	1	0.5
A, B, C, D, E and S, N, I, U	1	0.5
A, B, C, D, E and S, N, U	1	0.5
A, B, C, D, F and O, 1, 2, 3, 4	1	0.5
A, B, C, D, F and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1	0.5
A, B, C, D, F and E, S, I, N	1	0.5
A, B, C, D, F and E, S, N, U	1	0.5
A, B, C, D, F and E, S, I, U	1	0.5
A, B, C, D, F and O, S, N	1	0.5
A, B, C, D, F and O, S, I, N, U	1	0.5
A, B, C, D, F and P, I	1	0.5
A, B, C, D, F and Percentage scores	1	0.5
A, B, C, D, F and Reading Level	1	0.5
A, B, C, D, F, I and E, S, U, I	1	0.5
A, B, C, D, U and S, U	1	0.5
H, S, I, N	1	0.5
H, S, U	1	0.5
S, I, N	1	0.5
S, N, U and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1	0.5
S, U	1	0.5
S, X	1	0.5
VS, S, I, U	1	0.5

In addition to indicating what academic grading system was used in the school system, each principal was asked to state whether or not the number of students receiving each grade or score was indicated on the report card. The tabulated data are as follows:

<u>Response</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Schools not listing number of students receiving each grade or score	208	96.8
Schools listing number of students receiving each grade or score	5	2.3
No response	2	0.9

Factors covered other than academic grades. Table V shows that the most common factor other than academic grades included on report cards was the attendance record. Eighty-nine and eight-tenths per cent of the schools reported that this factor was recorded on their report cards. Citizenship ranked second, with 74.4 per cent of the schools evaluating this factor. There were nineteen factors evaluated by the schools.

TABLE V

FACTORS OTHER THAN SUBJECT MATTER EVALUATED ON REPORT CARDS
AS REPORTED BY 215 IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS IN 1967

Factor	Number	Per cent
Attendance	193	89.8
Citizenship	160	74.4
Effort	148	68.8
Attitude	140	65.1
Cooperation	122	56.7
Initiative	99	46.0
Interest	75	34.9
Work habits	6	2.8
Conduct	5	2.3
Social development	5	2.3
Capable of doing better	4	1.9
Reliability	3	1.4
Health habits	2	0.9
Checklist	2	0.9
Leadership	1	0.5
Reading level	1	0.5
Weight	1	0.5
Emotional development	1	0.5
Conference desired	1	0.5

The grading systems used by the schools in reporting progress in areas other than subject matter are shown in Table VI. The most widely used system was S, I, U, being used by 47.5 per cent of the 200 schools which evaluated factors other than subject matter, while 12.0 per cent of these schools used A, B, C, D, and F.

TABLE VI

GRADING SYSTEMS USED TO EVALUATE PROGRESS IN AREAS OTHER THAN
SUBJECT MATTER AS REPORTED BY 200 IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS IN 1967*

Grading System	Number	Per cent
S, I, U	95	47.5
A, B, C, D, F	24	12.0
Checklist	20	10.0
1, 2, 3, 4, 5	15	7.5
A, B, C, D, F and S, I, U	9	4.5
A, B, C, D, E	8	4.0
S, U	3	1.5
S, N, I, U	2	1.0
1, 2, 3	2	1.0
A, B, C	1	0.5
A, B, C, D, E and S, I, U	1	0.5
A, B, C, D, F and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1	0.5
E, S, N, U	1	0.5
H, S, I, N	1	0.5
H, S, U	1	0.5
O, S, I, U	1	0.5
O, S, N	1	0.5
O, S, N, I, U	1	0.5
P, I	1	0.5
S, I, N	1	0.5
S, I, U and 1, 2, 3	1	0.5
S, I, U and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1	0.5
S, N	1	0.5
S, N and 1, 2, 3, 4	1	0.5
S, N, U and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1	0.5
S, I, U and X, Y, Z	1	0.5
S, X	1	0.5
Scale - VL to VH	1	0.5
VS, S, I, U	1	0.5
1, 2, 3, 4	1	0.5

*15 of the 215 reporting schools did not evaluate progress in areas other than subject matter.

Provisions for comments. Table VII shows that 44.2 per cent of the schools returning questionnaires allow space on the report cards for teacher comments. Twenty and nine-tenths per cent of the report card allow space for both teacher and parent comments.

TABLE VII
PROVISION MADE FOR COMMENTS ON REPORT CARDS AS
REPORTED BY 215 IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS IN 1967

Provision	Number	Per cent
Space is provided for teacher comments only	95	44.2
No space is provided for comments	64	29.7
Space is provided for both teacher and parent comments	45	20.9
No response	10	4.7
Parent-teacher communication form enclosed	1	0.5

Frequency of distributing report cards. The majority of elementary schools distribute report cards every nine weeks. Seventy-nine and one-tenth per cent used this schedule.

TABLE VIII

FREQUENCY OF REPORT CARD DISTRIBUTION AS REPORTED BY 215 IOWA
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN 1967

Frequency	Number	Per cent
Every nine weeks	170	79.1
Every six weeks	16	7.4
Once each semester	6	2.8
No response	23	10.7

Frequency of issuing D or F slips. Table IX illustrates the various frequencies in issuing D slips, F slips, or unsatisfactory slips. Seventy-five and six-tenths per cent of the 123 schools making use of these slips issued them midway between report cards.

TABLE IX

FREQUENCY OF ISSUING DEFICIENCY SLIPS AS REPORTED BY 123 IOWA
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN 1967*

Frequency	Number	Per cent
Midway between report card distribution	93	75.6
Whenever needed	24	19.5
Weekly	2	1.6
End of quarter	1	0.8
Every three weeks	1	0.8
Every six weeks	1	0.8
Each semester	1	0.8

*92 of the 215 reporting schools did not issue deficiency slips.

Information included on progress reports and letters.

Table X shows the types of information included on progress report forms and progress report letters. Seventy-one and six-tenths per cent of the schools that made use of these reporting practices indicated that they included information concerning low grade reports.

TABLE X

INFORMATION INCLUDED ON PROGRESS REPORT FORMS AND PROGRESS
REPORT LETTERS AS REPORTED BY 67 IOWA ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN 1967*

Information	Number	Per cent
Low grade reports	48	71.6
Attitude	44	65.7
Effort	39	58.2
Cooperation	32	47.8
Initiative	29	43.3
Interest	24	35.8
All grade reports	22	32.8
Dependability	22	32.8
Resourcefulness	8	11.7
Work Habits	3	4.5
Attendance	1	1.5
Behavior	1	1.5
Social growth	1	1.5
Inadequate subject background	1	1.5

*148 of the 215 reporting schools did not send progress report forms or progress report letters to parents.

Frequency of issuing progress reports and letters.

Table XI shows the frequency with which progress reports and letters were distributed by the schools in which they were used. Thirty-one and three-tenths per cent issued them at

mid-quarter. Twenty-five and four-tenths per cent when needed, and 16.4 per cent were issued at the end of the quarter.

TABLE XI

FREQUENCY OF ISSUING PROGRESS REPORT FORMS AND PROGRESS REPORT LETTERS AS REPORTED BY 67 IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN 1967*

Frequency	Number	Per cent
Mid-term or mid-quarter	21	31.3
When needed	17	25.4
Quarterly	11	16.4
End of 4 weeks	5	7.5
Every 6 weeks	2	3.0
First and third quarter	2	3.0
End of semester	2	3.0
Every 3 weeks	1	1.5
End of year	1	1.5
Second and fourth quarter	1	1.5
End of third quarter	1	1.5
Two weeks before report cards	1	1.5
Twentieth of each month	1	1.5
Every 5 weeks	1	1.5

*148 of the 215 reporting schools did not issue progress report forms or progress report letters.

Frequency of conferences. Table XII shows how frequently parent-teacher conferences were held in the 201 Iowa elementary schools which reported using them. The most frequent time for conferences to be held was at the end of the first and third nine weeks with 69.7 per cent of the schools holding them then. The next most frequent time was when requested by the teacher with 24.9 per cent of the

schools holding them then. This was followed by conferences being held when requested by the parents, 19.9 per cent.

TABLE XII

FREQUENCY OF PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES AS REPORTED BY 201
IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN 1967*

Frequency	Number	Per cent
End of first and third nine weeks	140	69.7
When requested by the teacher	50	24.9
When requested by the parent	40	19.9
End of first quarter	14	7.0
In November	9	4.5
End of each semester	5	2.5
End of second and fourth six weeks	4	2.0
Sometime in the fall	3	1.5
End of first quarter and when Basic Skills results are returned	2	1.0
Thirteenth and twenty-second week	1	0.5
End of first and fourth quarter	1	0.5
Fifth and thirty-second week	1	0.5
Fifteenth and twenty-sixth week	1	0.5
Ninth and twenty-fourth week	1	0.5
End of fourth quarter	1	0.5
Spring quarter	1	0.5
October	1	0.5
January	1	0.5

*14 of the 215 reporting schools did not use parent-teacher conferences.

Released time allowed for parent-teacher conferences.

Principals were asked to report whether or not their schools allowed released time for parent-teacher conferences. The following data are based on the 201 schools which used parent-teacher conferences:

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Schools allowing released time	177	88.1
Schools not allowing released time	24	11.9

Table XIII shows the amount of released time set aside in the schools for parent-teacher conferences. Fifty-seven and five-tenths per cent allowed two days.

TABLE XIII

RELEASED TIME ALLOWED FOR PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES AS
REPORTED BY 177 IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS IN 1967*

<u>Time allowed</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
2 days	102	57.5
1 day	47	26.6
1½ days	8	4.5
1 hour per day for 5 days	6	3.4
1½ hours per day for 3 days	2	1.1
1½ hours per day for 4 days	2	1.1
2 hours per day for 5 days	2	1.1
4 afternoons	2	1.1
1 hour per day for 2 days	1	0.6
2 hours per day for 3 days	1	0.6
2½ days	1	0.6
3 days	1	0.6
4 days	1	0.6
As much time as needed	1	0.6

*38 of the reporting schools did not allow released time for parent-teacher conferences.

Time of day designated for parent-teacher conferences.

Table XIV states the time of day assigned for parent-teacher conferences by the schools using this method. There were

57.2 per cent of the schools which indicated that parent-teacher conferences were held during school hours only.

TABLE XIV

TIMES DESIGNATED FOR PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES AS REPORTED
BY 201 IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN 1967*

<u>Times</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
During school hours only	115	57.2
After school hours before the evening meal	68	33.8
Before school hours	9	4.5
After the evening meal	7	3.5
During school hours and after the evening meal	2	1.0

*14 of the reporting schools did not allow released time for parent-teacher conferences.

Purpose of parent-teacher conferences. Of the 201 schools that used parent-teacher conferences only 3.0 per cent indicated that these conferences replaced the report card for reporting student progress. Ninety-six per cent of the schools which used parent-teacher conferences indicated that they used the conferences to supplement the report cards.

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
Supplements the report card	193	96.0
Replaces the report card	6	3.0
Getting acquainted with the parent	2	1.0

Rating of reporting practices used. Table XV reveals the number and per cent of the 215 reporting schools using each of the reporting practices mentioned earlier in this chapter along with the ratings by principals as to the value of these practices in achieving their school's desired objectives.

Fifty-three and five-tenths per cent of the principals rated parent-teacher conferences plus report cards as "good" while only 1.0 per cent rated them as "poor".

D slips were rated "fair" by 48.8 per cent of the administrators and "good" by 39.0 per cent. F slips were rated "good" by 39.0 per cent and "fair" by 34.1 per cent.

Progress report forms were rated "fair" by 43.8 per cent of the principals, 31.3 per cent rated them "good", and 12.5 per cent rated them "poor".

Report cards were rated "good" by 45.5 per cent of the principals and "fair" by 27.3 per cent of the principals.

Progress report letters were rated "fair" by 55.6 per cent of the principals and "good" by 22.2 per cent. Eleven and one-tenth per cent rated them as "poor".

Checklists were rated "fair" by 62.5 per cent of the principals. None of the principals rated checklists as being "superior".

Narrative reports were rated "good" by 40.0 per cent, "fair" by 20.0 per cent, and "poor" by 20.0 per cent.

TABLE XV

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF 215 IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS USING VARIOUS TYPES OF PROGRESS
REPORTING PRACTICES, INCLUDING RATINGS BY ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS
AS TO THEIR VALUE IN MEETING DESIRED OBJECTIVES IN 1967

Type of Practice	<u>Total</u>		<u>Superior</u>		<u>Good</u>		<u>Fair</u>		<u>Poor</u>		<u>No Response</u>	
	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent	Num- ber	Per- cent
Parent-Teacher Conferences plus report card	201	93.5	70	35.0	107	53.5	13	6.5	2	1.0	7	3.5
D Slips	41	19.1	2	4.9	16	39.0	20	48.8	2	4.9	1	2.4
F Slips	41	19.1	2	4.9	16	39.0	14	34.1	7	17.1	2	4.9
Progress Report Forms	16	7.4	2	12.5	5	31.3	7	43.8	2	12.5	0	0
Report Cards	11	5.1	1	9.1	5	45.5	3	27.3	1	9.1	1	9.1
Progress Report Letters	9	4.2	1	11.1	2	22.2	5	55.6	1	11.1	0	0
Checklists	8	3.7	0	0	2	25.0	5	62.5	1	12.5	0	0
Narrative Reports	5	2.3	0	0	2	40.0	1	20.0	1	20.0	1	20.0
Parent-Teacher Conferences	2	0.9	1	50.0	1	50.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Self-Evaluations	2	0.9	0	0	0	0	2	100.0	0	0	0	0

Parent-teacher conferences were rated "superior" by 50.0 per cent and "good" by 50.0 per cent.

Self-evaluations were rated "fair" by all of the principals.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to find out what methods were being used for reporting student progress in Iowa elementary schools, the number of schools using each method, and the frequency with which each method was used. Principal's opinions regarding the degree to which reporting practices were meeting their school's desired objectives were also included.

The research done in connection with this study was accomplished by the use of a questionnaire to survey 232 Iowa elementary school principals in the year 1967. The questionnaire used in this survey included the following areas: (1) types of methods used in reporting progress, (2) procedures used in distributing progress reports, (3) types of grading systems used in academic subjects, (4) factors evaluated other than subject matter, (5) types of grading systems used in areas other than subject matter, (6) frequency of reporting progress, and (7) how nearly each reporting practice that is used meets the schools' desired objectives. The questionnaire was sent to 232 elementary principals in the state of Iowa; 215, or 92.7 per cent, were returned and the replies tabulated.

I. SUMMARY

The elementary schools in Iowa were in definite agreement as to the type of reporting practices used. Report cards plus parent-teacher conferences were used by 93.5 per cent of the schools returning questionnaires. Nineteen and one-tenth per cent of the schools used D slips and F slips. The following reporting practices were used by less than eight per cent of the schools participating in the study: progress report forms, report cards, progress report letters, checklists, narrative reports, conferences, and self-evaluations.

Sixty-four and two-tenths per cent of the reporting schools indicated that the local school district or school staff designed their own report cards.

The study indicated that 52.1 per cent of the reporting schools had the teachers distribute report cards to the students. In 26.5 per cent of the schools, report cards were distributed sometimes to the students and sometimes to the parents.

There were many different types of grading systems used in recording academic grades. The one system used most frequently was the use of A, B, C, D, F. This system was used in 55.3 per cent of the schools.

In the study, the most common factor included on report cards other than academic progress was attendance, which was reported by 89.8 per cent of the schools. Nearly

one-half of the schools which evaluated progress in areas other than subject matter used a grading system of S, I, U.

Seventy-nine and one-tenth per cent of the schools in the study indicated that they distributed report cards at nine week intervals.

Almost three-fourths of the schools indicated that they made use of either progress reports or progress letters and about the same amount included low grade reports on them.

Sixty-nine and seven-tenths per cent of the schools indicated that they used parent-teacher conferences at the end of the first and third nine weeks.

Over half of the schools allowing released time for the use of parent-teacher conferences allow two days. Also, over half of the schools which held parent-teacher conferences held them only during school hours.

The most common rating given by principals when evaluating reporting practices in terms of meeting each school's desired objectives were "good" and "fair". Parent-teacher conferences plus report cards were rated as "good" by over half of the principals. Over half of the principals rated progress report letters and checklists as being "fair".


II. CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the findings of this study, which investigated the progress reporting practices used in Iowa

elementary schools, the following conclusions are presented;

1. The most common reporting practice was the parent-teacher conference plus report card.
2. The most frequently used practice for distribution of report cards was once every nine weeks.
3. Deficiency slips were usually distributed midway between report card distribution periods.
4. Progress report forms and progress report letters were issued the majority of the time at mid-quarter.
5. Parent-teacher conferences were held most frequently at the end of the first and third nine weeks.
6. The most common rating given by principals when evaluating reporting practices in terms of meeting each school's objectives were "good" and "fair" on a scale ranging from "superior" to "poor".

The elementary schools in Iowa are in agreement with the educational trends of today. According to most authorities the most effective method of communicating student progress to the parent is through the parent-teacher conference. Ninety-three and five-tenths per cent of the Iowa elementary schools use this method to inform the parents of their student's progress.



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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE ON REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

Please place an X in front of the method or procedure of reporting to parents used at your school. If an expression of opinion is requested, place an X in the appropriate column. Space is provided for additional answers.

1. What methods of reporting do you use in your school?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Report Cards | <input type="checkbox"/> F Slips |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent-Teacher Conferences | <input type="checkbox"/> Narrative Reports |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Report Cards plus Parent-Teacher Conferences | <input type="checkbox"/> Progress Report Forms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Checklists | <input type="checkbox"/> Progress Report Letters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> D Slips | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Evaluation |

OTHER METHODS USED _____

2. What type of report card is used?

- ☐ Company designed
- ☐ Designed by the local school district or school staff
- OTHER _____

3. What method is used in distributing report cards?

- ☐ Distributed personally to the student
- ☐ Distributed personally to the parent by the teacher
- ☐ Distributed by mail to the parent

OTHER MEANS OF DISTRIBUTION _____

4. What type of grading system do your teachers use to indicate academic progress on your report cards?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A, B, C, D, E | <input type="checkbox"/> 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A, B, C, D, F | <input type="checkbox"/> Percentage scores |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A, B, C, D, U | |

OTHER TYPE OF GRADING SYSTEM USED _____

5. Do the teachers indicate on the report cards the number of students receiving each grade or score?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. What factors other than subject matter progress are evaluated on report cards by your teachers?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance | <input type="checkbox"/> Effort |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attitude | <input type="checkbox"/> Initiative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship | <input type="checkbox"/> Interest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation | |

OTHER FACTORS COVERED ON REPORT CARDS _____

7. What type of grading system do you use to indicate progress in factors other than subject matter on report cards?

☐ A, B, C, D, E

☐ A, B, C, D, F

☐ S, I, U

☐ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

☐ Percentage scores

OTHER TYPE OF GRADING SYSTEM _____

8. Which of the following applies to comments on your report cards?

☐ Space is provided for teacher comments

☐ Space is provided for parent comments

☐ No space is provided for comments

OTHER METHODS USED _____

9. How often are report cards distributed?

☐ Every six weeks

☐ Every nine weeks

OTHER INTERVAL USED BETWEEN DISTRIBUTION _____

10. If D, or F, or unsatisfactory slips are used, when are they distributed?

☐ Weekly

☐ Midway between the time report cards are distributed

☐ Whenever needed

OTHER INTERVAL USED BETWEEN DISTRIBUTION OF SLIPS _____

11. If progress report forms or letters are sent to parents, what type of information is included in them?

☐ All grade reports

☐ Attitude

☐ Cooperation

☐ Dependability

☐ Effort

☐ Initiative

☐ Interest

☐ Low grade reports

☐ Resourcefulness

OTHER FACTORS COVERED IN PROGRESS REPORT FORMS OR LETTERS _____

12. If used, when are progress report forms or letters sent out?

13. If parent-teacher conference progress reporting is used, how often are these meetings scheduled?

☐ Once a semester (When? _____)

☐ Once a year (When? _____)

☐ When requested by the teacher

☐ When requested by the parent

OTHER PROCEDURE USED _____

14. If parent-teacher conferences are held to report student progress, is released time allowed away from teaching duties?

 Yes

 No

15. If released time is allowed for parent-teacher conferences for the purpose of reporting progress, how much time is allowed per year?

 1 day

 1½ days

 2 days

AMOUNT OF TIME IF DIFFERENT THAN ABOVE

16. If parent-teacher conferences are held, when and how much time is allowed during the school year for the conferences?

 Full day at a time

IF A FULL DAY, HOW MANY FULL DAYS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

 Half day at a time

IF A HALF DAY, HOW MANY HALF DAYS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

 Before school hours

 During school hours

 After school hours before the evening meal

 After the evening meal

17. If parent-teacher conferences are used, what is the purpose of these conferences?

 Replaces the report card for reporting student progress

 Supplements the report card for reporting student progress

PURPOSE OR PURPOSES IF OTHER THAN ABOVE

18. Of the reporting practices used at your school, how would you rate each of them in terms of meeting your school's desired objectives?

	Superior	Good	Fair	Poor
Report Cards	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Parent-Teacher Conferences	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Report Cards plus Parent-Teacher Conferences	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Checklists	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
D Slips	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
F Slips	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Progress Report Forms	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Progress Report Letters	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Self Evaluation	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
LIST OTHERS BELOW	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO PRINCIPAL

February 11, 1967

As a partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's Degree at Drake University, I am conducting a survey to find out what procedures are being used in reporting student progress to parents in Iowa elementary schools.

It is hoped that through the means of this survey, administrators and others will be able to obtain up-to-date information concerning reporting procedures that will prove helpful in determining whether or not revisions should be made in their own school's reporting procedures.

It is vital that a good response be obtained by those to whom the questionnaire is sent. I would appreciate your filling in the response and returning the questionnaire in the prepaid self-addressed envelope. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Robert M. Frank